

# The Ultimate Guide to Influencer Marketing

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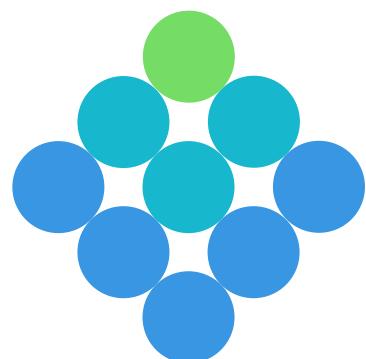
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# What is Influencer Marketing

Whether content development happens internally or in collaboration with an agency, it's critical to implement a message approval workflow that facilitates team publishing and ensures consistent, on-brand messaging.

## Key Influencer Marketing Terms

### Macro Influencer

Well-known online presence with 100,000-1 million followers. A macro influencer's reach usually spans a broad audience, like young women or teens. These influencers are available for higher budget campaigns.

### Micro Influencer

A micro influencer typically has between 1,000-100,000 followers. Micro influencers have more defined and specific audiences and are respected experts in their field. These individuals are less expensive than macro influencers and have great engagement rates.

### Nano Influencer

Nano influencers are the smallest in terms of following, but have the best engagement, typically within a local or super niche community. Nano influencers usually have less than 1,000 followers and are selective about the products or brands they endorse.

### Influencer Marketing Channels

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Blogs
- YouTube
- Email
- Newsletter
- Digital/print ads
- Television

### Influencer Content Types

- Blog posts
- Instagram posts/stories
- Facebook posts
- Sponsored Facebook Live
- Twitter posts/videos
- Snapchat videos/photos
- Emails
- LinkedIn posts/videos
- YouTube videos
- Magazine/newspaper articles
- Television appearances/videos

# Finding Value for Your Company Using Influencers

Influencers come in all levels of “celebrity,” often synonymous with audience size. Macro, micro, and nano influencers provide varying levels of investment and offer options for all marketing budgets. When considering what type of campaign you’d like to run for a given project, consider the [following factors](#).

## Influencer Marketing Campaign Variables

- **Expertise:** Does the content you are promoting or product you sell match with the influencer’s audience?
- **Reach:** Is this influencer present on the same channels and platforms as your audience? For example, if your target audience is in their teens, it may not be useful to reach out to an influencer whose main following is on LinkedIn.
- **Demographic/Audience:** Does your buyer persona match this influencer’s following? What does a typical follower of their audience look like?
- **“Celebrity”/Notoriety:** Is this influencer generally well-liked?

# Why is Influencer Marketing Important?

Influencer marketing is growing at an incredible pace, and for a good reason.

Searches for influencer marketing have **grown by 1500% in the past four years.**

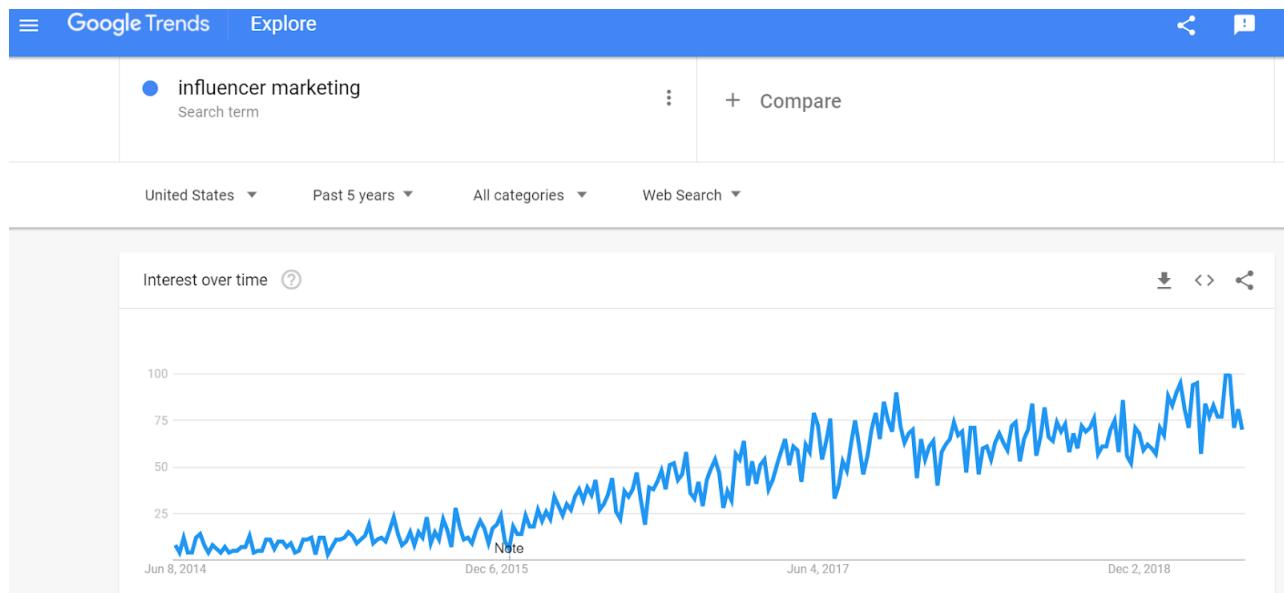


Image via [Google Trends](#)

With Instagram's user-base and engagement growing exponentially and the [influencer market predicted to more than double its 2017](#) profit numbers in 2019, the currently \$4.6+ billion dollar industry is a lucrative marketing strategy for businesses of all sizes. [80% of marketers have found that influencer marketing](#) has been helpful in growing their business.

## Influencer Marketing Statistics

- [71% of marketers](#) find that influencer marketing leads are better quality than other lead generation sources.
- LinkedIn is the [most effective social media site](#) for sharing content and garnering audience engagement
- Over [half of the online population](#) follows a celebrity or influencer on social.
- [49% of buyers rely on influencers](#) for purchase decisions
- Marketers spent [\\$570 million](#) on Instagram influencer marketing in 2017
- [\\$5,000-10,000 is the average price](#) per macro influencer (500,000 to 1 million followers) post.

## What is an affiliate program?

As we discussed earlier, affiliate marketing is a branch of influencer marketing that is more transactional and allows affiliates to send referrals to a company over time, making money by sending customers to a company's website usually using an affiliate tracking link.

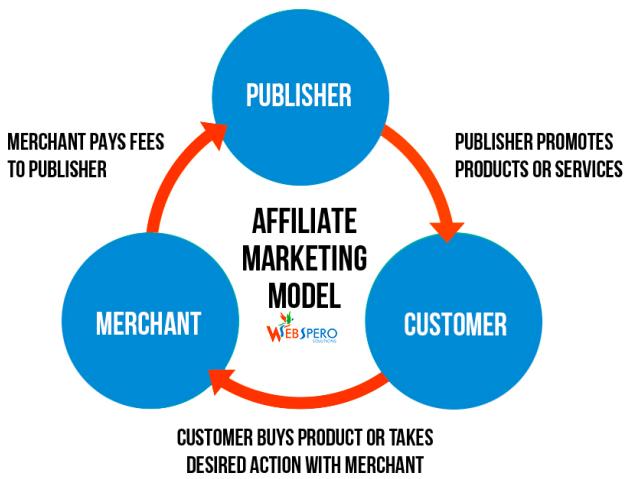


Image via [HubSpot](#)

Affiliates can promote a given company or publisher's product on their own social media networks, blogs, videos, or in any other content format. Most companies pay affiliates on a monthly basis and have a dashboard where they can track their progress, best content sources, and successful clicks, leads, or sales.

### Key Affiliate Marketing Terms

- **Affiliates:** Those who promote a product, service, or brand.
- **Product/Company/Brand:** The organization that wants to promote their website, product, or service via an affiliate.
- **Network/Affiliate Network:** The network or tracking system to manage affiliates, referrals, and sales.
- **Consumers/Buyers:** Those purchasing or following the product or brand. The end goal audience of an affiliate marketing campaign.
- **Pay-Per-Click Campaign:** Affiliates get paid for every click they generate, whether or not that click leads to a sale.

- **Pay-Per-Lead Campaign:** For these campaigns, affiliates will get paid based on the number of leads, as defined by the company, they generate. This could mean people who give their email, fill out the form, or request a demo.
- **Pay-Per-Sale Campaign:** This is the most common structure, as affiliates are the most incentivized to deliver interested leads to the company.

### **What is an Affiliate Marketing Campaign?**

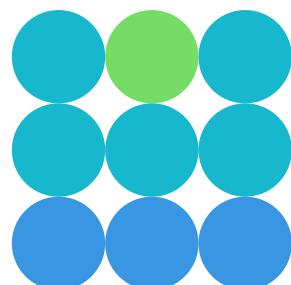
An affiliate marketing campaign is a relationship between a company and an affiliate or brand advocate who makes money by promoting the company or product to their audience. For example, let's say you're a successful beauty blogger who often posts recommendations for your favorite tools, products, and brands. A company who creates makeup brushes now wants to get their brushes in front of your audience. Now, you can try the product and if you like it, you can become an affiliate for the company. Every time someone buys the brushes using your link, you'll get paid.

### **Key things to remember in affiliate marketing:**

- Don't spam your audience with promotional posts for a product, you'll quickly lose followers and break your audience's trust.
- Don't directly ask your audience to buy the product.
- Only serve as an affiliate for products and companies you respect.

### **Recommended Affiliate Marketing Tools**

- [ClickBank](#)
- [ShareASale](#)
- [Everflow](#)
- [LinkTrust](#)



# Who are Influencers and How Do You Find them?

Influencers are pretty much as their name suggests, influential people.

Specifically, influencers have a highly engaged audience on social media, so access to them serves as a powerful marketing tool to boost qualified traffic to your website. Influencers can [help guide your audience to making a buying decision](#)—their advice means a lot to their followers.

Like we outlined in the first chapter, influencers can range from macro influencers and celebrities to niche, nano influencers with smaller social media followings. So, when you're scrolling through Twitter and see someone with over 1,000 followers, how can you tell who is an “influencer”?

## How to Find Influencers in a Specific Field

- **Listen:** Set up a Twitter feed for a certain hashtag, celebrity, or related topic. You'll start to notice the same users' posts rising to the top tweets repeatedly, and their engagement is consistent and organic with their followers. Using Sprout's Advanced Listening, brands can also surface influencers, their followers and engagements when seeking influencers within a certain industry.
- **Find them in their space:** Lots of photography and lifestyle influencers use [The Hub](#), a platform that connects content creators with companies. You can also [use LinkedIn](#), Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram to directly reach out to influencers who inspire you and align with your brand. Often a personal first touch from a social media manager will have more impact than outreach from your brand account.
- **See who follows and interacts with macro and celebrity influencers:** Smaller influencers often have [much better engagement rates](#) at better prices. This works particularly well in the retail, foodie, and fitness spaces. Odds are, the smaller influencer was inspired by a larger one, and may have a slightly different, untapped audience.
- **Use your resources:** Tools like [Buzzstream](#) and [Buzzsumo](#) offer products to find influencers in fields like tech, communications, retail, and more, as well as manage influencer campaigns.
- **Analyze past performance:** Take a look at an individual's post performance across social media platforms. Does a certain influencer get 1 million likes on Facebook posts but is lacking on Instagram? Consider how and where you'd like to partner with them.

# Examples of Successful Influencer Marketing Campaigns at the Macro, Micro, and Nano Influencer Levels

## Macro Influencer: Ingrid Nilsen, 1.4M Instagram Followers



Image via [Ingrid Nilsen](#) on Instagram

Ingrid has partnered with Sephora, CVS Beauty, and other beauty brands like Simple Skin and maintains a lifestyle Instagram, [YouTube channel](#), Twitter account, and Facebook page.

Her Instagram posts have garnered over 25K likes each and sponsored content blends seamlessly in with her non-sponsored posts. Working with influencers to create content that is authentic to their audience will create a better follower experience and more successful campaign.

## Macro Influencer: Gary Vaynerchuk, 3M LinkedIn Followers

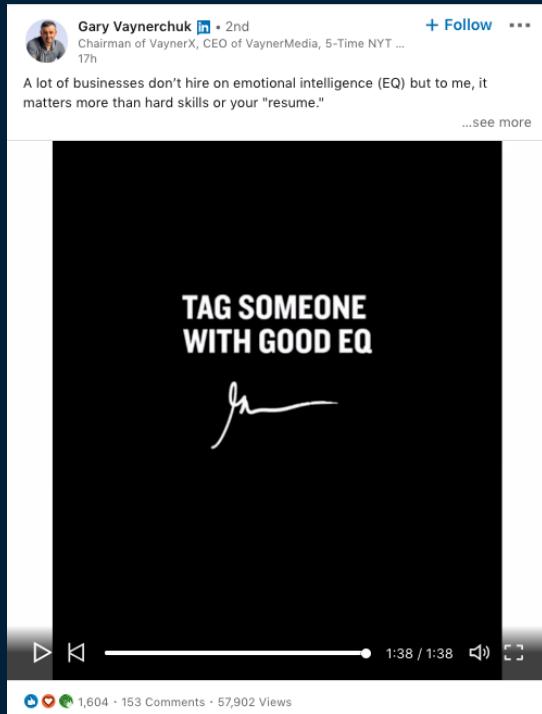


Image via [Gary Vaynerchuk](#) on LinkedIn

First known as a wine critic who expanded his family's wine business, Vaynerchuk is best known for his work in digital marketing and social media, through New York-based VaynerMedia.

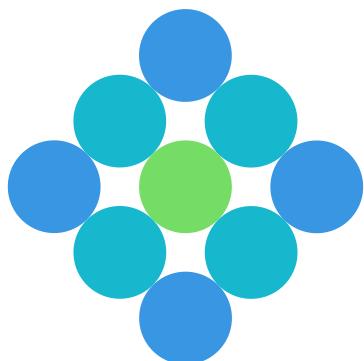
Today, Gary has more than 12M combined followers across social media, producing content daily on Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Spotify and more. Gary also hosts a global top 100 business podcast, The GaryVee Audio Experience, which features new episodes every day.

## Micro Influencer: Nurse Clara, 57.4K Instagram Followers



Image via [Nurse Clara](#) on Instagram

Clara Jones is a Registered Nurse who has a lifestyle blog and Instagram account. She partners with brands like TX Compression Socks, Figs scrubs, and other nursing and lifestyle brands to incorporate relevant products for her followers. Many niche professionals like those in healthcare often share recommendations and favorite products.



## Micro Influencer: Mari Smith, 230K Facebook Followers

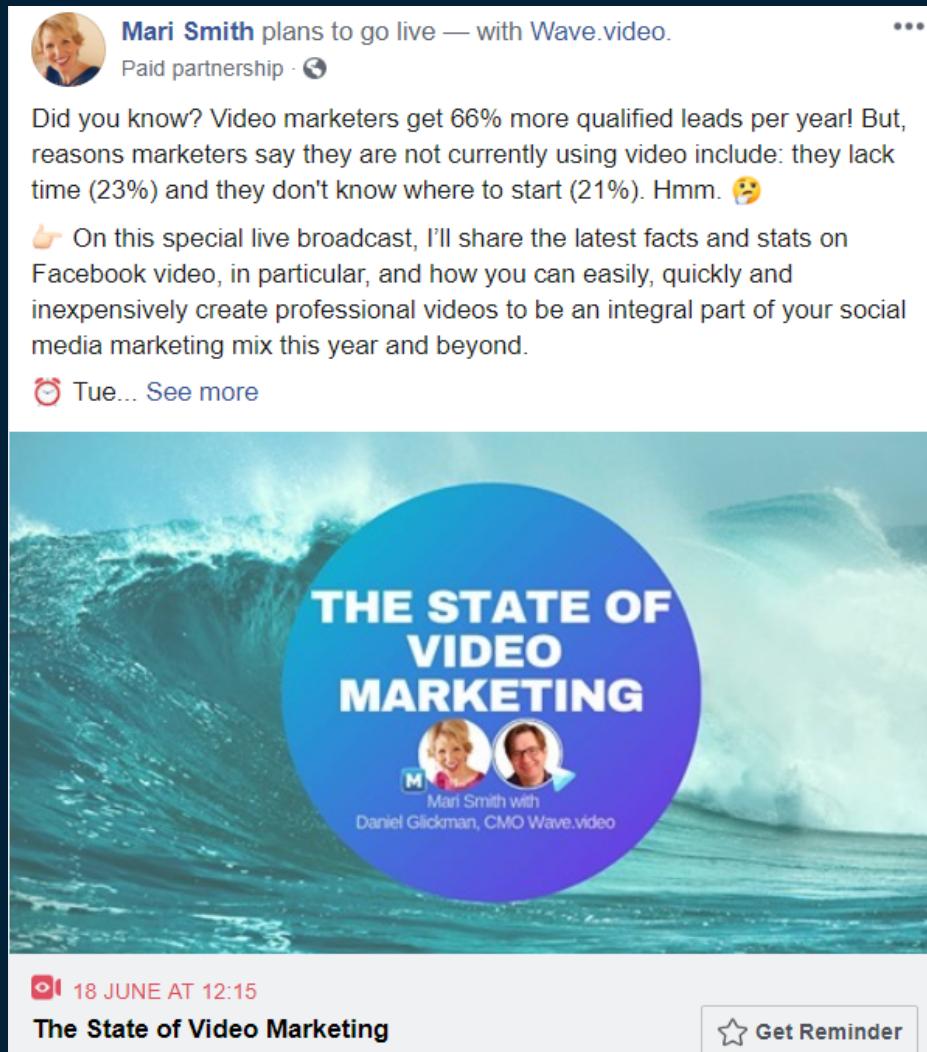


Image via [Mari Smith](#) on Facebook

Mari Smith started out as a business consultant and her honest posts on Facebook helped to grow her online presence and make her the “Queen of Facebook.” Mari maintains a [YouTube channel](#) and partners with brands and fellow marketers across many social media platforms.

## Nano Influencer: Boston Fitness Fanatic, 889 Instagram Followers



Image via [Boston Fitness Fanatic](#) on Instagram

Jackie Zaccardo is a local Boston fitness influencer and hula hooper with a growing, engaged audience. She works with brands and products that she personally uses to offer promotions to her followers, generating business for companies like I Dream of Hoops, mentioned in her post.

# Chapter Five: What is an Influencer Marketing Campaign?

Let's get into the nitty-gritty details of organizing an [influencer marketing campaign](#). If you're interested in an affiliate campaign, skip ahead to the next section. Influencer campaigns include research and strategy, outreach and influencer relations, goals, contracts, payment, and analysis. Read on to go through each part of the influencer campaign, step-by-step.

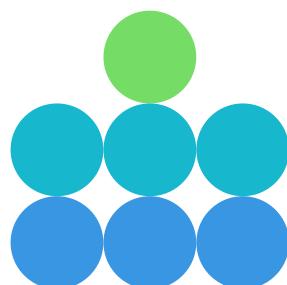
## Influencer Marketing Campaign Process

### Step One: Research

Determine where your audience lives. Start by analyzing the demographics of your social audiences as well as those of your competitors. Research common hashtags and explore the top influencers in your industry. Sprout has a great [social media demographic resource](#), which is a helpful place to start. You can also use tools like Sprout's Advanced Listening to identify key social conversations and influencers discussing your brand, product or industry. Search through their followers and find an influencer whose size and rough budget aligns with your brand and goals.

### Step Two: Outreach

Once you've identified some candidates, start your outreach. Follow or connect with people you respect and be honest about what you're looking for. If you have influencer contacts, ask for an introduction or a warm handoff. LinkedIn can be a great resource to find mutual connections to influencers in your field.



## Email Template for Influencer Outreach

Subject line: Sponsored content opp - time to connect?

Body: Hi [Influencer],

I've been following your content and love your messaging surrounding [topic/product.] We recently shared your post and it performed great with our audience. I'd like to talk to you about a sponsored content campaign for us, [insert company here.] Do you have a few minutes to chat sometime soon? I'm available at [email/contact info.]

## Direct Message (DM) Template for Influencer Outreach

Message: Hi! I've been following your content and love your messaging surrounding [topic/product.] I'd like to talk to you about a sponsored content campaign for us, [insert company here.] Time to chat soon? I'm available at [email/contact info.]

### Step Three: Campaign Specifics, Budget, Goals, and Contract

Create a detailed campaign plan. If you'll be using multiple influencers, use a common hashtag, like Trello's recent #ReadySetGoal campaign. By using influencer support and targeting with Sprout Social, they [increased their following by 71%](#) and generated 33% more mentions.

When considering budget, consider the quality of the leads you'll generate. Compare the cost-per-click, cost-per-lead, or cost-per-sale you spend on comparable, automated channels like social media advertising or sponsored newsletters. Expect to pay more than a nonspecific audience, as influencers' followers are curated and less frequently targeted with ads than brand accounts, therefore more engaged and higher quality.

Work with the influencer or affiliate to identify a timeline, goal or KPI list for the campaign (or each individual post), and any requirements, legal restraints, or guidelines. Make sure your goals are SMART—specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. [Here's a free template for creating SMART goals.](#)

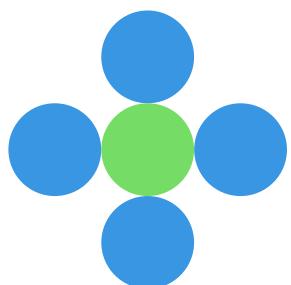
Who is your target audience or buyer persona? Key demographic? Create a contract detailing both the influencer's deliverables and the agreed upon fee and payment timeline/method. This is a good opportunity to provide brand style guides, font files, brand colors, or any other resources they may need. Make sure you agree on messaging and give good examples of similar posts that inspire you and align with your brand.



Image via [Ira Wolf Music](#) on Instagram

In this post, Ira Wolf, a musician whose posts have a desert, wanderer, outdoorsy aesthetic, partnered with an outdoor equipment company, Kelty Built, to create a natural sponsored post that aligns with both audiences.

**Tip:** Assign value to various metrics. For example, how much are followers worth when you invested in an expensive series of blogs? Check out this handy table of returns and investments which can help you document which campaigns are worth the budget.



INFLUENCER MARKETING RETURN ON INVESTMENT (IMRI)	
ROI =	RETURN INVESTMENT
	Brand awareness / thought leadership
	Leads and sales revenue
	SEO
	Traffic
	Conversions
	Cost of content production
	Cost of sourcing content externally
	Content strategy management
	Content distribution, advertising
Software and tools	

Image via [HubSpot](#)

#### Step Four: Tracking

A major component of any influencer or affiliate marketing campaign is tracking. Any company can provide a tracking URL to influencers (template below), or you can choose to use either an influencer/affiliate software or a CRM (like [HubSpot's free CRM](#)) to track and manage influencers.

#### UTM Template

Here is a tracking URL with urchin tracking modules (UTMs), which help to identify the source of traffic for a given piece of content.

[http://www.hubspot.com/?utm\\_source=Influencer&utm\\_medium=Instagram&utm\\_campaign=HubSpotLife&utm\\_content=Affiliate%20Aaron](http://www.hubspot.com/?utm_source=Influencer&utm_medium=Instagram&utm_campaign=HubSpotLife&utm_content=Affiliate%20Aaron)

For this example, the following [UTM parameters \(tags\)](#) are used:

- Utm\_source: campaign source, ex. “Influencer”
- Utm\_medium: the platform like social media, blog, email, ex. “Instagram”
- Utm\_campaign: the campaign name, ex. “HubSpotLife”
- Utm\_content: an individual piece of content or influencer, ex. “Affiliate Aaron”

To customize this URL for your content, just substitute your URL for “hubspot.com,” then enter your own parameters after = in the URL. You can use as many UTM tags as you would like and leave out the ones you don’t need. If you’re a HubSpot user, use the [HubSpot Tracking URL Builder](#) to save time.

You can also use tools like the [Sprout Smart Inbox](#) to monitor certain hashtags and key terms to track your campaign.

### Step Five: Payment

When considering how much you'll be paying influencers, most will have a certain price they charge per post or campaign. Affiliate marketing campaigns are different, those are paid based on tracked clicks, leads, or sales generated by the affiliate. Influencers typically charge a fee for posting and the results are proposed and projected, but not guaranteed.

To get a gauge on how much you should be paying influencers at each level, first determine [what type of influencer they are](#). Micro influencers [typically charge \\$80-500 per post](#) and macro or celebrity influencers charge between \$3,000-500,000+ per post. Nano influencers are often looking for partnerships to help grow their brand and name. Many are happy to receive free products in exchange for a sponsored post.

### Step Six: Analytics

One of the most important parts of an influencer marketing campaign is analyzing the results. As we discussed before, influencer marketing is not an exact science when it comes to predicting outcomes. After a campaign or a post has been completed (or along the way), you'll need to look out for these metrics.

- **Engagement:** this includes likes, shares, comments, reposts, and any other interaction with the post
- **Impressions:** numbers of times a piece of content has been viewed. Can be considered as the “actual views” metric.
- **Reach:** number of followers an influencer has on either one or all social media platforms combined. It is an indicator of audience size, which is helpful for marketers to forecast potential impressions.
- **Results/Resonance:** how many people took action based on the post

When tracking campaign or post performance, you can utilize Sprout's Analytics Suite to easily gather key data insights in presentation-ready reports. Along with reliable data, analysis is key to choosing which influencers have

good ROI for your company, which ones need more coaching on future content, and which may not be a good fit for your audience.

## **Influencer Marketing Campaign Checklist & Staying Organized with Influencer Marketing**

When working with influencers, make sure to keep detailed records on your end of campaigns, influencers, goals, and progress. By quickly identifying your most successful influencers, topics, posts, and pairings, you'll be able to optimize and streamline your influencer marketing efforts. Work with influencers and treat each relationship like a partnership, creating goals and content that work for both of your audiences. Be honest and create an open discussion if you'll be continuing to work with influencers or affiliates in the future.

### **Influencer Marketing Campaign Checklist**

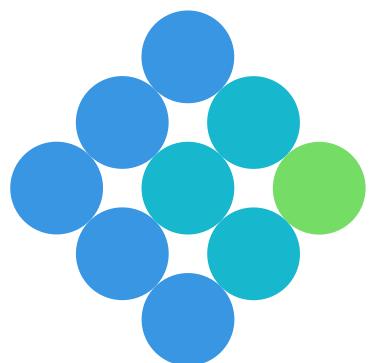
- Campaign brief
- Terms & conditions of contract
- Creative Release Agreement
- Non Disclosure Agreement
- Brand/content guidelines
- UTM templates and tracking

### **Influencer Marketing Organization/Continued Relationship Management Checklist**

- CRM for tracking influencers/campaigns, HubSpot offers a [free CRM option](#)
- Social media management tool, Sprout Social allows you to monitor hashtags or keywords and measure the impact of influencer campaigns
- Payments/Budget
- Post performance and data
- ROI
- Demographics and audience
- Engagement

## Recommended Influencer Marketing Tools

- [Sprout Social](#)
- [HubSpot CRM](#)
- [BuzzStream](#)
- [Buzzsumo](#)



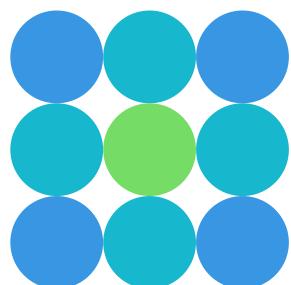
# Dos and Don'ts of Working with Influencers

## Dos

- Do pay influencers on time and within the agreed upon payment period terms. Creating and maintaining a good relationship with any brand advocate, micro, macro, or nano, is crucial for the success of the campaign.
- Do give helpful feedback and provide as much data as possible to the influencer.
- Do use mutually beneficial goals that are agreed upon before the campaign starts.
- Do use software to your advantage. Tools like [Sprout Social's Audience Targeting](#) can publish influencer posts to specific portions of your audience if you want to target a certain product audience or demographic.
- Do send thoughtful gifts and thank you notes following successful campaigns or as an intro.
- Do interact with them frequently and organically on social media.

## Don'ts

- Don't try to force your product or brand on an influencer whose audience doesn't align with yours. This will only hurt both parties and be a waste of money.
- Don't go rogue and run a campaign without a proper tracking setup. It'll be a challenge to try to associate sales with the influencer's work after the fact.



# Influencer Marketing Challenges (+ How to Solve Them)

Influencer and affiliate marketing can be extremely valuable and cost-effective ways to grow your audience and find new brand loyalists. Unfortunately, as influencer marketing is slated to become a [6.5 billion dollar industry](#) by the end of this year, it also attracts fraudulent individuals trying to get a piece of the pie. [78% of marketers](#) also report their biggest challenge with influencer marketing is tracking return on investment (ROI). Here are some common influencer marketing challenges and what to do if you run into them, with advice from the [Influencer Marketing Council](#), a group that aims to promote influencer marketing best practices and combat unethical behaviors.

## Challenge

Suspected fake/purchased followers

## Solution

Track an influencer's follower patterns and keep an eye out for sudden spikes and dips, which are indicative of purchased followers. Watch for a mismatch in ratio between followers and likes. If someone has tens of thousands of followers but only receives a handful of likes, that's a red flag for purchased followers.

**Tip:** Look where an influencer's followers engage from or geotag the most. Does it match the influencer's most common locations? If not, that can be a flag for purchased followers.

## Challenge

Engagement rates

## Solution

Look out for a benchmark of [20% of impressions](#) when comparing to an influencer's followers.

## Challenge

Catfishing/stolen images or identities

## Solution

Verify images by Google searching an individual, scrolling back and finding older images to compare, or reverse image searching a handful of photos. You should be able to quickly find if someone used another person's image from the internet.

**Challenge**

Bot followers and comments

**Solution**

Look out for unnatural or suspiciously robotic comments or usernames. If they don't make sense or include strange characters, spacing, or language, they could be purchased to help with comment ratios.

**Challenge**

Tracking ROI

**Solution**

Use specific usernames or tracking URLs for sponsored posts and content. Then, divide the campaign spend by the number of likes, comments, shares, total reach, visitors to your websites, leads, or sales that can be directly attributed to the influencer campaign. Determine which metric is the most valuable to you and use that to determine price per action.

# Conclusion

Influencer and affiliate marketing are a great channel to grow the top of your funnel and get an audience of engaged followers to learn about your company from a source they trust. Influencer marketing can help you grow any part of your funnel all the way to driving sales or help to increase brand awareness. With influencers and affiliates existing at every size and budget, any company can take advantage of this fairly new strategy and see incredible results.

## Resources

- [The Ultimate Guide To Affiliate Marketing](#)
- [Does Influencer Marketing Actually Work](#)
- [Six Step Process To Maximize Your Influencer Outreach](#)
- [13 Influencer Marketing Campaigns to Inspire and Get You Started With Your Own](#)
- [5 Great Examples of Instagram Influencer Marketing](#)
- [How To Work With Influencers—The Ultimate Guide](#)
- [An Expert's Guide To Influencer Marketing](#)
- [Using Sprout Social For Influencer Marketing Campaigns](#)
- [How To Find Social Media Influencers](#)

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